

## **RECOMMENDATIONS TO CABINET 8 JUNE 2022 FROM THE REGENERATION AND DEVELOPMENT PANEL MEETING HELD ON 6 JUNE 2022**

### **RD7: CABINET REPORT – KING’S LYNN TOWN DEAL UPDATE**

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The Assistant Director presented the Cabinet report which provided an update on the progress made to develop detailed Business Cases for the projects approved by the King’s Lynn Town Deal Board and Borough Council (as accountable body) under the government’s Towns Fund programme. A copy of the presentation is attached which provided information on the status of projects, the revised Town Deal Programme, and the next steps. The Panel was informed that the project adjustment process was set out by Government.

Members of the Town Deal Board were also present at the meeting.

The Chair thanked officers for their report and invited questions and comments from the Panel, as summarised below.

Councillor Morley referred to the Guildhall and asked about priorities, scope, proposed outputs, and the National Lottery Heritage Fund (NHLF) Bid. The Assistant Director explained that it was important to recognise how far the projects had developed in the last twelve months since the heads of terms were prepared, and this had expanded the outputs and outcomes and changed the priority level. The Assistant Director also explained that the NHLF supported the development of the stage 1 submission for funding.

Councillor Morley asked why the Guildhall had been made a higher priority. Graham Purkins, Chair of the Town Deal Board explained that the projects were run against a series of metrics to determine their priority and the Guildhall Project had met a lot of the objectives of the Towns Fund and provided opportunities for economic prosperity which put it at high priority. The increase in budget was because the scope of the project had been broadened and more details of the specifics of the project were now apparent. The Assistant Director stated that the benefit cost ratio for the Guildhall Project had significantly improved now detail was available.

Councillor Ryves referred to the information provided in the presentation relating to reprioritisation and asked if there was an alternative to the proposals as he felt there were a lot of risks involved. He referred to projects that other Local Authorities were undertaking and raised concern that training, and skills had not been included. The Chair reminded Members that now was not the time to be looking at new projects, the Panel should be considering the reprioritisation proposals. She also reminded Councillor Ryves that training, and skills were included in the Guildhall and Multiuser Hub.

The Portfolio Holder for Business, Culture and Heritage explained that the traffic light system used for the projects would evolve and be reviewed to ensure that the projects continued to meet their objectives. He also referred to the two projects which were already underway, the School of Nursing and the Youth and Training Pledge which were all about skills and training.

Councillor Jones referred to recommendation four and raised concern that authority had been delegated to Portfolio Holders who were also Members of the Town Deal Board and was concerned that this may cause a conflict.

Councillor Rust addressed the Panel under Standing Order 34. She was concerned that the risk of the projects had increased and was in contradiction to the Council's Risk Management Policy. She did not feel that the changes were an acceptable risk. The Regeneration Programmes Manager explained that the reprioritisation included a review of risks.

Councillor Rust also referred to the project for the floating restaurant which was now not proceeding. The Regeneration Programmes Manager explained that the initial design work of infrastructure which had been carried out for this project could be utilised in the design of the riverfront scheme under the towns fund programme.

Councillor Rust felt the underwriting of the Guildhall Project was too much of a risk for the Council and the Panel was reminded that a decision had already been made by the Council to underwrite the project should the NLHF application not be successful.

The Vice Chair, Councillor Gidney raised concerns that the Multiuser Community Hub was a financial risk and he felt that little information was available on what purpose the Hub would serve. He also felt that a qualified and competent Project Manager was required on this project. The Regeneration Programmes Manager explained that work on the Hub had started in 2019/20, with consultation exercises carried out, but was halted by the Covid Pandemic. Norfolk County Council were leading on this project and an update report on what the project would deliver would be presented to a future meeting of the Panel.

Councillor Parish addressed the Panel Under Standing Order 34. He commented that more information on what the Multiuser Community Hub would deliver, needed to be forthcoming. He also felt that the Active and Clean connectivity project should have been a high priority as it would have the most benefit. He referred to the organisations that would be engaged in the project. The Regeneration Programmes Manager explained that detailed plans for each organisation would be drawn up and assistance would include grant support on different ways to encourage sustainable travel choices. It was also explained that the rest of the funding for active and clean connectivity would include travel plans, travel hub on Nar Ouse Regeneration Area, projects identified from the Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan and changes to the gyratory system.

Councillor Parish referred to recommendation three in the Cabinet Report and asked if the Town Centre Re-purposing project would come through the Council's decision-making process. The Assistant Director confirmed that it would.

Councillor Moriarty addressed the Panel under Standing Order 34 and raised concern with the delegated authority in recommendation four. He also felt that more information should be published on the Vision King's Lynn Website and confidential papers should be made available to Borough Councillors.

The Portfolio Holder for Business, Culture and Heritage suggested that recommendation four could be amended to include consultation with the Task Group that had been set up for the Guildhall and Creative Hub Project.

Councillor Kemp addressed the Panel under Standing Order 34. She felt that the Guildhall Project was important to the town and agreed with its reprioritisation. She asked if the disabled lift and restaurant provision would be included as part of the project. The Assistant Director confirmed that three lifts were included as part of the project and discussions with

the current catering provision on site was ongoing as well as looking at ways to expand the provision.

Councillor Kemp raised concern about the Multiuser Community Hub (MUCH). She felt that costs were increasing and there was a lack of known benefits. She also commented that the proposed site had a much smaller footprint than the existing library. She was concerned about the loss of the library building as a Heritage Asset. Natasha Hayes from Norfolk County Council explained that Norfolk County Council would be funding the ongoing revenue costs of the project and there was no financial pressure on the Borough Council. She explained that engagement and consultation had been carried out and a summary document was available which could be shared with members. Natasha Hayes confirmed that the proposals for the MUCH would have a much larger footprint than the existing library.

The Portfolio Holder for Business, Culture and Heritage, Councillor Middleton explained that there were no plans to sell the current Library building and it would be retained as a community asset.

Councillor de Whalley addressed the Panel under Standing Order 34. He made reference to Active and Clean Connectivity, the travel hub, Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan, the West Lynn Ferry and asked for assurance that reduce scope to the Active and Clean Connectivity element were not made to protect car parking revenue. He also raised concerns regarding the Multiuser Hub and contingencies for the Guildhall. The Assistant Director explained that the Active and Clean Connectivity (ACC) programme had been presented to a previous meeting of the Panel and provided detail of how the project linked with other projects relating to the town centre. The Assistant Director explained that the scaling back of the ACC programme was not to protect car parking revenue.

Assistant Director, David Ousby provided additional information on the Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan and the other elements of the Active and Clean Connectivity programme.

Councillor Morley raised concerns relating to governance, delegated authorities and the information that would need to be provided to the Task Group in order for them to carry out their work, including detailed base data to underpin the cost benefit ratio.

Councillor Ryves felt it was important for the Panel to scrutinise Town Deal Board projects and he was not happy with the level of risk involved.

Councillor Moriarty addressed the Panel under Standing Order 34 and referred to exempt paperwork from the Town Deal Board being made available to Members. It was confirmed that the Council's Monitoring Officer was currently in discussion with the Town Deal Board on information that could be published.

The Chair invited Graham Purkins, Chair of the Town Deal Board to address the Panel. Graham Purkins reminded the Panel that projects had come from the Town Investment Plan which had been prepared and submitted two years ago. The project list was then submitted to Government and was also approved by the Council. Today the Panel were now considering reprioritisation of the projects that had already been approved, there were no new projects included. There was not an opportunity to look at new projects at this time as the projects had to work within the government framework. Graham Purkins explained that the Town Deal Board had established Advisory Boards and various Champions to leads on

projects. He also explained that Governance was being looked at, points would be taken on board and the information available would be reviewed.

The Monitoring Officer clarified that the Town Deal Board had made a decision to publish all open papers on their website and the Town Deal Board would need to make further decisions on if additional information was released.

The Monitoring Officer also reminded the Panel that the Council had two hats on in relation to the Town Deal Board, it had three appointees to the Town Deal Board, who were representing the Council and the Council was also the accountable body.

The Portfolio Holder for Business, Culture and Heritage explained that the Task Group could liaise and work with the Borough Council appointees to the Town Deal Board.

The Panel discussed the wording of the Cabinet Recommendations and the suggestion that recommendation four be expanded to include consultation with the Guildhall and Creative Hub Task Group.

The Regeneration Programmes Manger confirmed that the Panel would be kept up to date on progress with projects, and business cases which were not yet agreed would also be presented to future Regeneration and Development Panel meetings.

It was also explained that the Terms of Reference for the Guildhall Complex and Creative Hub Task Group had been agreed by the Regeneration and Development Panel and Corporate Performance Panel at previous meetings. Should the Panel wish to expand the remit of the Task Group, revised Terms of Reference would need to be submitted to both Panels for consideration and agreement.

**RESOLVED:** That the Regeneration and Development Panel support the recommendations to Cabinet, with amendments set out in bold below.

1. Cabinet endorses the revised Town Deal programme, as the accountable body for the fund.
2. Cabinet endorses the submission of project adjustment forms to government.
3. Cabinet agrees that the Town Centre Re-purposing project should remain a priority project to be pursued by the Borough Council and delegate authority to the Chief Executive in consultation with the S151 Officer, Monitoring Officer and Deputy Leader to bring a separate business case forward for this project outside of the Town Deal programme **and this would go through the normal democratic processes.**
4. Delegated authority is granted to the Chief Executive and S151 Officer, in consultation with the Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Regeneration **following scrutiny by and comments from the Guildhall Complex and Creative Hub Task Group**, to agree the final business cases yet to be submitted to government, with the Town Deal Board.